

## PRESS RELEASE

### WHO with funding from the Government of Canada to build maternity complexes in Torit, Kuajok and Awiel

As part of the efforts to reduce maternal mortality in South Sudan, the WHO with support from the Government of Canada is to build maternity complexes in Torit, Kuajok and Awiel.. This is the second phase of the 19.4 million Canadian Dollars project that comprises of infrastructure, equipment's and training of health personnel.

The groundbreaking ceremony in Torit, Kuajok and Aweil from 26 to 28 January 2016, was performed by Honorable Dr Riek Gai Kok, Minister of Health, Republic of South Sudan, accompanied by the Governors of the States in the presence of the Canadian Ambassador to South Sudan, the WHO representative, the Head of Cooperation in the Embassy of Canada, the Undersecretary Ministry of Health, Members of the National Parliament, Miss World South Sudan and WHO South Sudan Staff among others.

In his opening remarks, the Honorable Minister of Health Dr Riek Gai Kok, highlighted the tremendous and ongoing commitments of the Government of South Sudan, the contributions of the people of Canada and the commitments of WHO and other partners to reduce the alarming rate of maternal and neonatal deaths in South Sudan.

Since the inception of the six year (2011 – 2016) Comprehensive Emergency Obstetrics Neonatal Care (CEmONC) project, considerable progress has been made with the successful completion of the fully-equipped maternity complexes in Bor, Wau and Yambio.



The Minister of Health, the Governors of the States, The Canadian Ambassador, the WHO Representative, the Undersecretary and the Head of Cooperation in the Embassy of Canada breaking the ground in Torit, Kuajok and Awiel (photo credit: WHO)

“In the last quarter alone in those three maternity complexes emergency obstetric and newborn services provided to over 18 000 mothers and over 1 600 women have been operated by the gynecologists/obstetricians”, said Dr Abdulmumini Usman, the WHO Representative to South Sudan.

In addition to the construction of the maternity complexes, WHO has also deployed international obstetricians and gynecologists and midwives to the six hospitals of Bor, Torit, Aweil, Kuajok, Yambio State hospitals and Wau Teaching Hospital and granted scholarships for over 20 medical doctors to further their studies in gynecology and obstetrics as part of capacity building for the cadres in the country.

“With Sustainable investments and commitments by the Government and partners, such as the Government of Canada, WHO, UNFPA , South Sudan has witnessed a drastic reductions in maternal mortality from 2 054 per 100 000 live births to an estimated 700 per 100 000 live births” said Dr Makur M. Kariom, the Undersecretary at the Ministry of Health.

“The establishment of the six maternity complexes and the physicians enrolled for gynecology and obstetrics trainings in the neighboring countries strengthens both community and State health services by expanding the availability of quality maternal and newborn health care in South Sudan” said his Excellency Nicholas Coghlan, the Canadian Ambassador to South Sudan, adding that the Government of Canada renewed its commitment for another five years to improve the health of women, newborns and children in South Sudan.

The new Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health, launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in September 2015, aims to help achieve the ambitious target of reducing maternal deaths to fewer than 70 per 100 000 live births globally, as included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The target of reducing maternal deaths by 2030 under SDG 3, is ambitious but achievable provided we redouble our efforts”, said Dr Abdulmumini. He noted that, ensuring access to high-quality health services during pregnancy and childbirth is helping to save lives, hence, WHO is committed to provide support to the people of South Sudan not only through the CEmONC project but also through adopting the ‘health through life course’ initiative.

The beneficiary communities showed their appreciation and support for the projects through speeches by the Governors and Parliamentarians and cultural display by the members of the communities.

The new facilities will include a maternity theatre, delivery room and up to 28 bed maternity ward with integrated neonatal and postnatal services.

Media contact:

Dr Suzie Francis Paul- +211-954455396; pauls@who.int

Jemila M. Ebrahim- +211-950450007; ebrahimj@who.int